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Eagles Head to Oakland for First of Three in a Row on the Road



Saturday, Dec. 21, 2013 » 1 p.m. » Athletics Center O'rena (3,000) » Rochester, Mich.

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YPSILANTI, Mich. (EMUEagles.com) -- The Eastern Michigan University men's basketball team will head out of Ypsilanti after snapping a three-game losing streak against the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, 67-58, Dec. 10. EMU will be on the road for three games to close out the calendar year. First up for the Eagles is a 52-mile jaunt up to Rochester, Mich. for a contest with the Oakland University Golden Grizzlies, Dec. 21. After an 11-day hiatus, the Green and White and Oakland will tip-off at 1 p.m. at the Athletics Center O'rena.

In the victory over the Phoenix, the Eagles iced the game away, making 28-of-39 attempts throughout the night. Eastern shot 43.9 percent from the field (18-for-41), including 3-of-7 from beyond the arc. The EMU defense was strong all night long, holding the Phoenix (5-3) to just 35.3 shooting from the floor and forcing 18 turnovers.

Four Eagles reached double-digits in scoring, led by [Raven Lee](#). The redshirt-freshman scored 17 points, making seven of his eight foul shots. [Karrington Ward](#) added 13 points and seven rebounds to continue the strong start to his

EMU career. [Mike Talley](#) recorded 11 points, going 8-of-10 from the charity stripe, while dishing out four assists without coughing up a turnover. [Da'Shonte Riley](#) packed the stat line with 11 points, eight boards, three blocks and an assist before fouling out with 14 seconds left in the game.

FINDING THE GAME AT HOME: The Eagles' contest with the Golden Grizzlies will hit the airwaves of 89.1 FM (WEMU). In addition to the WEMU broadcast, the game will be available for fans to watch on the Horizon League Network.

Veteran "Voice of the Eagles" **Chad Bush** will serve as EMU's play-by-play announcer and [Sean Hostetter](#) will handle the analyst duties for the WEMU broadcast. EMU Assistant Athletic Director, [Greg Steiner](#), will be the broadcast's engineer and in-game producer.

WHAT'S TO COME: Following its contest with Oakland, the Green and White complete the 2013 calendar season with a pair of road games, neither of which will be a cake walk for the Eagles. EMU will first head out of Michigan for a pair of tilts against two teams ranked in the Associated Press' top-10. Eastern will take on No. 8-ranked Duke University in Durham, N.C., Dec. 28, before heading to Syracuse, N.Y. for a New Year's Eve battle with the No. 2 Orange of Syracuse University, Dec. 31.

ALL-TIME AGAINST OAKLAND: The Eagles and Golden Grizzlies have only met on the hardwood 13 times, despite being just 52 miles away from each other. EMU holds the all-time series lead, winning eight of the 13 games between the two. The last time these two teams squared off, Oakland came to the Convocation Center, Dec. 22, 2012, defeating the Eagles on their home floor 59-57.

In that game, [Jalen Ross](#) scored a career-high 17 points shooting 6-of-13, while [Jamell Harris](#) led Eastern's defensive effort with two blocks, two steals, and six rebounds. Oakland's Travis Bader led all scorers with 21 points, shooting a perfect 6-of-6 from the line and nailing five triple tries. Eastern (6-5) shot 19-of-47 (40.4 percent) for the game, while Oakland (5-8) went 17-of-54 (31.5 percent). Oakland opened the scoring with a three from Ryan Bass. The Grizzlies took an early 8-2 lead assisted by two quick turnovers by Eastern. [Da'Shonte Riley](#) worked the glass impressively for the Eagles, tallying five rebounds in the opening 10 minutes of play and eight total on the day. Tough defense by Harris and seven first-half points from the hot hand of Ross kept the Eagles in the contest.

RAVEN LEE NAMED MAC WEST PLAYER OF THE WEEK: Redshirt-freshman combo-guard [Raven Lee](#) was named the Mid-American Conference West Division Player of the Week, the league office announced Monday, Dec. 16. It was the first time the Detroit, Mich. native has garnered the award in his career.

Lee led the Eagles to a victory over the No. 12-ranked team in the CollegenInsider.com Mid-Major Top 25 poll last week, Dec. 10, when it defeated the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, 67-58, at home. Lee had a team-high 17 points, which ranks as the third-most in the Detroit, Mich. native's young career. Lee shot 55.6 percent (5-of-9) from the floor in the victory, while knocking down 80.0 percent (8-of-10) of his free throw attempts. In addition to his outstanding scoring effort, the combo-guard pulled down three rebounds, dished out a pair of assists and picked the Phoenix's pocket once on the way to a perfect record last week.

PUTTING THE GAME ON ICE: Despite some suspect free throw shooting this season, the Eagles knocked down 28 free throws, tying a season-high in the 67-58 win over Green Bay, Dec. 10.

HOLDING THEM AT BAY: In the Eagles' 67-58 victory over Green Bay, Dec. 10, the Green and White held the Phoenix to their lowest point output during the 2013-14 season. The last time the Phoenix was held to less than 60 points came last season when Green Bay fell to Valparaiso, March 2, 2013, 56-75.

AT THE TOP OF THE MAC: The Eagles are leading the esteemed Mid-American Conference in multiple categories this season. EMU posts the best scoring defense (63.8 ppg), field goal percentage defense (36.5 percent) three-point shooting percentage defense (27.8 percent), blocked shots (7.9 bpg) and turnover margin (+4.4). EMU ranks second in three-point field goal percentage (37.4 percent), third in steals (8.7 spg) and fourth in assists (12.9 apg) and scoring margin (+8.1).

Individually, [Da'Shonte Riley](#) leads the way in blocks, averaging 3.9 per contest, while [Glenn Bryant](#) is third, turning away 2.5 per game. [Karrington Ward's](#) 16.1 points per game is good for the fifth-best in the MAC and Bryant is hitting 57.1 percent of his shots which is the fifth highest percentage in the conference. Additionally, [Mike Talley](#) has an assist/turnover ratio of 2.1, ranking fourth.

JUST A STONE'S THROW AWAY: Eastern will embark on its second shortest road trip of the 2013-14 season Saturday, Dec. 21, when it travels to Oakland University in Rochester, Mich. It is just a 52.1 mile trek from the Convocation Center to Athletics Center O'rena. The shortest jaunt for the Eagles this season is not much closer, but when the Eagles head to Savage Arena to take on Toledo, they will travel just 48.5 miles south.

AGAINST MICHIGAN SCHOOLS: In their 117-year history, the Eagles have squared off with all six current NCAA Division I institutions, seeing Central Michigan the most times. Overall, the Green and White hold a 163-274 record against those teams, which include Central Michigan, Detroit, Michigan, Michigan State, Oakland and Western Michigan.

ALL-TIME AGAINST THE HORIZON: When facing teams who are currently in the Horizon League, the Green and White has posted a record of 71-93. EMU has been most successful against Cleveland State, with a 23-9 record. This season, the Green and White is 2-0 against the Horizon League and looks to extend that record to 3-0 with its Dec. 21 matchup at Oakland.

65 OR BUST: The Eagles seem to have found a magic number that they need to strive for this season. The Eagles are 6-0 when they score 65-or-more points this season. In their three losses they have not been able to eclipse that mark. Eastern scored 63 versus Kentucky, 57 in the setback to UMass and 64 in the game with Purdue.

ROAD TRIP: Eastern hits the road for three contests and will not return to Ypsilanti and the Convocation Center until its Jan. 4, 2014 matchup with Rochester College.

IN THE NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT: Eastern Michigan has a pair of big time games on the schedule coming up. EMU's games with No. 8 Duke, Dec. 28, and No. 2 Syracuse, Dec. 31, will both be televised on the national scale. The contest with the Blue Devils will be aired on ESPN2, with the tip-off slated for 2 p.m. Following their game with the Dukies, the Eagles will square off with the Orange on New Year's Eve at 1 p.m. and that game will be available nationally on ESPNU

A LONG DECEMBER: Head Coach [Rob Murphy](#) has not had much luck in the month of December since taking over the reins of the men's basketball team at EMU. So far this season, the third-year head coach is 1-2. In all three seasons as the head man, Murphy's teams have struggled, posting just a 4-12 record over the past three seasons. In 2011-12 Murphy managed a 1-6 record in the final month of the calendar year, while he went just 2-4 last season.

HAPPY AT HOME: The Eagles have enjoyed much success within the friendly confines of the Convocation Center this season. With a 6-1 record, EMU has shot 46.8 percent from the floor, while hitting 42.2 percent of its shots from three-point land. Eastern is scoring 74.3 points per contest, while holding its opponents to 60.6 points per game.

Under Head Coach [Rob Murphy](#), the EMU basketball team has been comfortable opening up the season inside the friendly confines of the Convocation Center. Throughout the past three seasons since Murphy has taken over the EMU program, he holds a 28-10 record inside the Convocation Center.

SEND IN THE SWAT TEAM: Eastern Michigan's defensive prowess is what has allowed the team to be successful the last few years. That stealthy defense includes their shot blocking ability. In its first seven games, EMU has blocked 71 shots and they average 7.9 per contest which is tied for the second-best in the country.

[Da'Shonte Riley](#) has led that defensive block party. The senior who transferred from Syracuse just two seasons ago has racked up 35 blocks already this season. The Detroit, Mich. native is also earning his spot in the EMU record books. The seven-footer has blocked 131 shots in his career, good for the third-most in EMU history. He is 36 shy of [Jamell Harris](#), while he trails the all-time leader Theron Wilson by a wide margin. Wilson finished his career with 257 rejections. Riley, however, has only played just over one and a half seasons for the Green and White, while Wilson appeared on the EMU roster for four seasons (1992-96). Riley holds down the No. 8 spot in the country with his 3.9 per game this season.

[Glenn Bryant](#) has been no slouch at turning away the opposition. He is averaging 2.5 blocks per contest, good enough to be tied for the 41st-most in the nation. His 64 career blocks rank him as the 14th-best shot blocker in EMU history.

ROAD WOES: Since [Rob Murphy](#) took over as the head coach of the Eagles, the team has struggled on the road. Overall, Murphy's teams are 7-27 on the road in his first three seasons. In non-conference play, the Green and White holds a 2-16 record away from the Convocation Center.

Murphy is looking for his team to answer the call and win on the road for the first time in non-conference play by topping one of its next three opponents. The Green and White will take on Oakland, Duke and Syracuse on the road in the next three weeks.

Last season, the Eagles' first road win came late in the season, Feb. 16, to be exact, when the Green and White traveled to Muncie, Ind. for a contest with Ball State. EMU was a 56-50 victor at John E. Worthen Arena.

CHECK THE SPECIALTY STATS: The Eagles are averaging 28.2 points per game in the paint, 27.6 points off the bench, 18.7 points per game off turnovers, 9.4 second-chance points and 10.7 fast break points per game.

BENCH WORK: The Eagles' bench is providing 27.6 points per game through the first nine contests. Those 27.6 points per game account for 38.3 percent of the Green and White's scoring this season.